

REVIEWS OF PUBLICATIONS

THE BIRDS OF NORTH AND MIDDLE AMERICA.

PART VI. BY ROBERT RIDGWAY.

The sixth part of this monumental work comprises the Picariae with the families Picidae (152 forms), Capitonidae (4 forms), Ramphastidae (14 forms), Galbulidae (3 forms), Buceonidae (13 forms), the Anisodaetylae with the families Alcedinidae (10 forms), Todidae (6 forms), Momotidae (20 forms), Caprimulgidae (39 forms), Nyctibiidae (5 forms) and the Striges with the families Tytonidae (9 forms) and Bubonidae (94 forms). Quite a number of new forms are here given for the first time and many critical remarks on already diagnosed forms are made. For instance in regard to the further subdivision of the genus *Centurus* among the Picidae. When it is stated that the forms of *Dryobates villosus* and *pubescens*, of *Colaptes auratus* and *Phlœotomus pileatus* show a gradual increase in size from Florida northward without any material change in coloration one is inclined to ask has the naming of all these forms a practical value besides the mere scientific value? A great deal depends of course upon the point of view in such cases, but when it comes to being a science for science's sake only, when the scientific and the practical are thus separated we are inclined to ask, "cui bono?" On the other hand, some of these problems must be solved along these lines, and no man is better able to solve them than Professor Ridgway, the distinguished author of this work. It is interesting, too, to notice the different views, which for instance Professor Ridgway and Dr. A. Reichenow, express in their respective works about such a family as the Striges. Space forbids us to enter upon any details, but a careful study of both authors will show that either view has some points in its favor, and that Dr. Reichenow's ideas cannot be disposed of with a few remarks, as was done in the review of his work in the Auk some time ago, which only showed and proved that the reviewer had not in the least understood the fundamental principle of Dr. Reichenow's classification, and in his ignorance of the case had simply squeaked its merits. *Cryptoglaux acadicus scotacis* is considered an individual variation of *acadicus* proper, and *Otus flammeolus idahocensis* is referred to *flammeolus*, and *Otus xantusi* is made a subspecies of *asio*, and we think in every case that Mr. Ridgway is correct. The same principle will perhaps apply to *Glaucidium gnoma hoskinsii*, which applies to *Cryptoglaux acadicus scotacis*. Altogether Mr. Ridgway is to be congratulated upon the completion of this volume, and we hope that the other parts will speedily follow.

W. F. H.